

INTEGRITY

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THE CULT OF THE
COMMON MAN

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EDITORIAL



HIS issue is likely to be somewhat of a shock to our readers. First of all because it looks different. Ed Willock (who is getting better, and who thanks our readers for their prayers) will be unable to draw for a while, so Nell Bonnemenn has done the cover and the cartoons. Nell is a convert and it is fitting that she should do her first art work as a Catholic for INTEGRITY because its two editors were her sponsors at Baptism.

But the article to which this issue is given over may also surprise our readers, so we wish to give a few words of explanation in our editorial.

The Cult of the Common Man hits at the central idea of communism, that society must be *leveled* into one classless mass of men acting as a unit. Since this idea is also pretty clearly developed in socialism and is pervading democracy like a poisoned gas, the author, Aurel Kolnai, doesn't talk about communism much, just about this false idea of equality, this *equalism*, with emphasis on its roots in liberal democratism.

Americans have been nourished on the doctrine that all men are created equal, which is sound enough as long as it conjures up images of escape from tyranny, of equality before the law, and of a spiritual order which transcends the often unjust lot of men on earth.

The doctrine that all men are created equal was never intended as a denial that men are conspicuously unequal. But today it is being pushed into that interpretation by the equalists, and we are gradually absorbing their interpretation. In fact there is a psychological social pressure bearing down on all of us to be ashamed of any excellencies we may possess, to desire nothing more for our children than that they be normal (that is, average), to boast of being unexceptional (that is, "regular"). Everyone has to go to college, but colleges have to lower their standards to make it possible. In a thousand ways we are being standardized, regimented, leveled.

This passion for leveling, this cult of the common man, has a religious flavor about it, a faint odor of a Christianity half-forgotten. We are in danger of being persuaded that it is, in fact, Christianity finally and triumphantly realized.

Mr. Kolnai's article is a vigorous reaction against this equalism, which he considers to be ersatz Christianity and contrary to the natural order, wherein men actually are unequal. He considers that an organic society must allow for these inequalities, must be hierarchical.

The biblical quotation which begins his article is the eleventh verse of the 14th chapter of Saint Luke. In the Gospel it immediately follows this parable:

When any man invites thee to a wedding, do not sit down in the chief place; he may have invited some guest whose rank is greater than thine. If so, his host and thine will come and say to thee, make room for this man; and so thou wilt find thyself taking, with a blush, the lowest place of all. Rather when thou are summoned, go straight to the lowest place and sit down there; so, when he who invited thee comes in, he will say, My friend, go higher than this; and then honor shall be thine before all that sit down in thy company.

Our cover drawing, inspired by these verses, pictures the social utopia of the equalists. Christ likened society to a dinner table with high and low places. He admonished us not to fight for the head chairs, but to seek seats at the foot of the table. By contrast the equalist society is like a round table with neither high nor low places. We asked Nell to put a Lazy Susan in the middle of the table because in a classless society there will be no servants.

THE EDITOR



Rosy is the future

How can one trip or stumble?

With eager pride let's rise and shine—

Securely, smugly humble.

The Cult of the Common Man and the Glory of the Humble

I. THE NEW PRIDE

Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.—Luke XIV, 11

This quotation from the Gospel furnishes a good basis for contrasting the Christian teaching about the equalities and inequalities of men in their earthly state, with the doctrines of galitarianism, or, as we shall call it, *equalism*. This doctrine is fully affirmed by communism, only slightly less so by socialism, and increasingly so by liberal democracy. But first, what does Christianity teach?

A Call to Humility

In so far as the Gospel formula contains practical advice it is the admonition, addressed to each one of us, to "humble himself," with a corresponding warning against any attitude of self-exaltation. Now what the apostles of social equality do mostly is to call upon the humble to "exalt themselves." As for those who already occupy a high social position, there is no question of recommending them to humble themselves, as by principle the social revolution addresses itself only to the disinherited. The privileged, generally speaking, are not supposed to be capable of conversion—as a category of the visibly reprobated they are simply destined to destruction. Nevertheless, the individuals among them who are willing to join the good cause are not invited to humble themselves, but rather to participate in the self-exaltation of the laboring classes which is simply the universal exaltation of humanity by its own strength.

"Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." It is not the humble man who exalts himself, it is God Who exalts the man who has humbled himself; it is not for us or the humble to humble those who have exalted themselves; once again, it is God Who is to do it. Now under the rule of equality it is precisely the humble man who is called upon to exalt himself, and at the same time it is the

humble—or more precisely *we*, who act on behalf of the humble—whose task it is to abase those who stand in high places.

Primarily a Spiritual Matter

We must at once note a second difference closely connected with the first one. The Gospel does not menace those in high position any more than it reassures the little men. These categories of men defined by their objective position in society are only aimed at accidentally or indirectly; there is a probability that the masters, the rich, will be proud; at the same time one may presume that humility will be found more easily among men of servile or proletarian condition.

It is also true that in the Gospel we can easily detect signs of a special sympathy for the poor and the simple and a corresponding suspicion of the rich and socially privileged. But this is only because of the above-mentioned psychological probability implied by the objective position on the social ladder. The stress is nevertheless on inner dispositions, on pride or humility of the heart. No criticism is addressed to the Roman authorities and there is much less severity toward the Jewish hierarchy and the rich than toward the Pharisees, who are neither very rich nor very powerful but who, considering themselves just, incarnate moral pride which is pride par excellence.

As a matter of fact, one can be tempted to draw from Christ's teaching—and it has been done—immoral conclusions as well as revolutionary ones. If it is true that the Gospel condemns social rank, it is at least as true that it sweeps aside moral distinctions. Yet we know very well that neither of these interpretations is true. The humble have nothing more in their favor than a greater chance to keep a humble heart while the rich and the powerful are more exposed to the temptations of pride. In their turn, the publican, the adulterer, the street walker, the thief, because of the social condemnation which hangs over them and the remorse which the coarser sins awake more readily, are easier to convert than the narrowly "virtuous" who ignore their own less showy sins and are sure of their justification (not to mention the hypocrites who transform virtue and moral justification into social ostentation).

It is because sinners are in a better position to repent and to convert themselves, and not because they are sinners, that they find favor in the eyes of Christ. Similarly it is because they are likely to be more disposed to humility, and not because of I know not what intrinsic superiority, that the humble enjoy Christ's particular preference.

The Rich Young Man

It is true that Christianity seems also to have an intrinsic reference for little, humble things, a tendency we shall discuss later on, and which is more than a simple call to humility and the condemnation of pride. But for the moment let us stick to the crucial question of pride and humility. No text gives us a more exact idea of what the Gospel wishes to emphasize than the episode of the rich young man.

The young man inquires after the means by which he may obtain salvation. Jesus replies simply by recalling the Ten Commandments and the precept which bids us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. It is only when His questioner insists on knowing what he must do to surpass this minimum which he already fulfills that Our Lord advises him to sell his possessions, give the profits to the poor, and to follow Him. The young man, who is attached to his fortune, goes away sadly.

It is this incident which provokes Jesus' remark that it is scarcely possible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven. The question of the fair distribution of material goods is not even touched. Opulence is to be deplored not as a social evil but as a heavy burden for the soul of the man who enjoys it, a grave danger to his salvation.

Invitation versus Force

According to the revolutionary interpretation of this passage, one would expect something like this. Jesus, encountering a poor young man who questions Him on the means to salvation, advises him to league himself with his fellows and dispossess the rich. But one may seek in vain for such an incident in the Gospel. On the contrary, it seems to consider social inequality (and even the servile condition) as part and parcel of man's earthly existence. The most that one can say is that the Gospel breathes a spirit of socio-political indifference rather than one of explicit conservatism. And at any rate there is no question of encouraging the poor to humble the rich or to dominate public life. There is only the appeal, addressed to all, to submit themselves to God and to humble themselves before Him.

It remains quite true that all those who possess either material goods or social rank or a comfortable existence will be well advised to consider the true value of their possessions, to recognize their ephemeral and transient nature, and to detach themselves in some way or other. A loss of prestige is certainly inflicted upon the rich man; he is given a serious warning, at the most a *duty* imposed on him; but on the other hand no rights are given to the

poor. If the rich young man wishes to amass treasures for Heaven, let him distribute his possessions to the poor; no one urges him and, even less, does anyone force him to do so. The legitimate character of his possessions and his right to property are certainly not contested. The Christian message therefore invites man—without forcing him, without making an obligation of its invitation—to renounce his rights.

Summing Up

We may sum up what we have said under three headings.

1. *Detachment and Seizure*

The egalitarian implications of the Christian message consist in the counsel addressed to man either to give up his possessions or to be ready to give them up with a light heart (to possess as if we possessed not), or again to realize the perishable quality of all earthly possessions and distinctions and to be detached from them instead of making them into absolute values. On the contrary, the doctrine of social equality or revolution urges man to seize what does not belong to him, but which could be considered his by right if only certain ideologies are accepted. Thus on one hand, the humbling of self, on the other, presumption.

2. *God and Superman*

In the Christian concept the ultimate solution of the tension existing between social inequality and absolute justice is promised as something God will Himself accomplish. The consciousness of such a promise cannot but have a partly equalizing effect on social relations. If I know that I, the humble man, am to be exalted while my proud neighbor, or maybe the hard master for whom I work, is destined to final humiliation, my submission is going to be in some way modified and limited by this knowledge. My respect will be perhaps marked by a note of reserve and of irony. Nevertheless the fact always remains that, provided I have kept the true meaning of the Gospel message, I know that if I try to execute the divine promise myself, it will not be accomplished at all.

In ceasing to be humble and in trying to humble the proud man or the oppressor, perhaps my own social superior as such, I destroy the effect of the promise which was made to reassure me. In a word, if I anticipate the fruits of divine retribution, I prevent it from working in my favor and deprive myself of the benefits it holds in reserve for me. It is here that we discover the roots of the frankly conservative aspect of the Christian innovation; a conservatism which does not derive from a simple acceptance and a naive glorification of social inequality, but from the recognition

of their problematic, accidental and transitory character. On the contrary, in the equalist, progressivist and revolutionary concepts (they are all the same for our present purpose) man is called upon to get along "on his own." He will perhaps thank God for having given him an excellent idea but he will work out the idea in his own way, surer and quicker according to him than the way of God Whose mills grind slowly. And perhaps God does not exist at all, perhaps He is only the name given to the source of good ideas which spring from our own brain, sometimes astonishing even ourselves. (Nevertheless the fundamental attitude we are describing here is not necessarily incompatible with belief in God nor even with the practice of faith. In this case there is formal submission with a casuistical interpretation—a submission which is the safety valve of pride.)

The contrast between pride and humility appears now to be transposed from the level of relations between individuals to that of man's relations with God, or, if one wishes, to that of the objective order imposed on man and for which man proposes to substitute an order made by himself. We shall see later on that the doctrine of *the common man* is much closer to that of the superman than we usually think it is.

3. *Souls and Ersatz*

Finally, the Gospel calls upon man to humble himself, that is, to turn to his own soul rather than to preoccupy himself with his possessions or his position compared to that of his neighbor. On the other hand social equalism gives his efforts an inverse inspiration and fixes his attention on riches and power with a maniacal intensity far surpassing the natural attitude of pagan man. In this type of mentality the eruption of the supernatural has shaken and in some way liquified the concept of a natural order. Those who, remaining within the framework of natural preoccupations, refuse the invitation of Christ, yet are aware of it, will henceforward be tempted to do violence to the physical and moral imperfections inherent to the natural order. Not only will they endeavor to escape little by little from its painful implications, they will also give themselves the task of remodeling it in its entirety.

By placing the little above the great, by troubling the pretensions of social hierarchy to absolute sanction and impeachable evidence, Christianity seems to have opened the way to a radical revision of social, political and economic relations. This revision tends to obliterate the distinction between the great and the little, kindles interest in the social and arouses worldly preoccupations

from which, at the beginning, it meant to avert man's attention. If Christianity signifies in a very real sense "the discovery of the soul," in the contemporary world of degraded and ersatz Christianity there exists in vast numbers the type of man that represents par excellence the soulless creature who forms a sad contrast with the vast possibilities offered by pagan worlds.

In brief, one might say that the true Christian is inclined to feel a certain contempt for the rich in the measure that he despises their riches, those more or less artificial goods to which the rich man is a slave. On the other hand, he who believes in the "social gospel" will demand the elimination of the rich for the benefit of all because riches seem to him the only good that counts.

Pride's Nemesis

In what sense can one still speak of pride in front of such a transformation? Is it not rather the general abasement of man to the animal level? How can pride be the motivating force which pushes man to submit to an entirely exterior determination, to place himself in the dependence of matter, to measure his own value by that of the things he possesses? But pride is still the principle of the will to power which translates itself by this fall into the material. The assimilation of man to matter which results from it—the nemesis of pride—is the end of the movement, not the motive from which it derives.

At the depths of all materialism is hidden a pale and livid spiritualism and unhealthy sublimity; if even within my soul there is no reality but matter, my self in its intangible and ineffable interiority will enjoy absolute spiritual supremacy. If matter is all, I can look down on everything. Moreover, if on the plane of social relationships I am assured that no one can occupy a position superior to my own, I am free to consider myself better than anyone else. It is said that no servitude, no exterior privation, can affect the supreme value of the soul. This saying will only prove true if we succeed in directing all exterior goods and services to the good of this supreme value. We fancy we are taking Christ at His word. We are going to apply His ideas, see if they work or not. We are going to take Christianity really seriously—we are really going to try to uplift the pagan world, as pagan, with methods borrowed from Christianity! This second step leads to a destruction of nature, to an implicit denial of the initial conversion. But let the reader beware; the result is far from a simple survival of pre-Christian paganism sprinkled with Christian

phrases. It is something quite different, a paganism profoundly modified, poisoned by the Christian contact—really a false Christianity.

Let us sum matters up. The call to humble oneself once heard and rejected produces an aggravation and a deepening of pride. Man, by not using the new grace, abuses it. From the factories and skyscrapers which remind one of cathedrals, to formulae such as "democratic faith" and the concept of a nation as a sort of mystical body, there is scarcely anything in the modern world which is not a hideous caricature of some Christian idea or other.

Ghost of the Humble

The common man in particular is but the ghost of the humble man and the poor man of the Gospel. His modern cult is the exaltation of the humble—anticipated, materialized, taken seriously, snatched from the senile, hesitant, inert hands of God and entrusted to the efficacious power of organizers, demagogues and priests of the state. What God has only vaguely promised, man, pushing God out, accomplishes—only in so doing he accomplishes something different. Also, his enterprise is from the beginning destined to disaster. All the same he is meanwhile accomplishing something rather curious, which differs in many ways from the innocent works of his ancestors still free from the Christian virus. The Gospel "ferment" will, according to the bards of Christian democracy, the high priests of the equivocation of which we write, produce a democratic society after a period of growth which has now reached its term.

But, it will be said, how can we understand this dialectic of humility converted into pride? And above all how can *pride* be the mainspring of the cult of the common man, even if one may suspect of pride the bad Christians at the back of the recrudescence of state absolutism at the beginning of the modern age? The concept of the common man is but a cheap and vulgar edition of the Christian concept of the poor man, we agree. But this petty, narrow ideal of littleness seems rather to belong to a flat philistinism, to a low-grade satisfaction cheaply bought, than to the folly of greatness.

The Mystery of Evil

We must remind ourselves that the Savior's injunction of humility has itself a semi-dialectical basis; it contains, if not a paradox, at least a certain tension. It cannot be considered apart from the promise, or rather the joyful annunciation, which accompanies

it. Of course, to the injunction "humble thyself" I can reply by an affirmative or by a refusal, but I cannot answer "very well"; so I will be proud. On the other hand,, when we learn that we are God's children, that we owe Him filial reverence and our neighbor an attitude reflecting that reverence, yet at the same time we know that we are heirs, it is not inconceivable that our attitude might be: "Let's see the inheritance—as soon as possible." As for filial reverence, it only puts off the day when we shall enjoy our rights. If we must, we'll make a slight gesture of reverence and then go on without any more delay to the chief business.

That this attitude reveals a practical error we do not deny, but to be astonished at this error would be to be astonished at the possibility of error as such, and moreover at the possibility of pride as such. The mystery we have come up against is no other than the eternal mystery of evil. The abuse made of the "good tidings" is only the abuse of a restored and enlarged liberty. The modern error of Christian humanity imitates on a new plane the sin of Adam. Once again the gain of material satisfactions—the collective apple tree so to say—is only the symbol of pride's pretensions to the science of good and evil, to universal security guaranteed in advance and possessed in virtue of our own right, thus eliminating the necessity of obedience, of restraint, of moral responsibility. As for the consequences of original sin—the whirl of material needs, multiplied from day to day, and whose unsatisfaction plunges us into misery—what else is it but a new dimension of the lusts consequent upon that sin? And does not the condemnation to hard work reappear in the workhouse which is the modern world under the label of "labor-saving machinery"?

On the subject of pride, the father and the hidden master of the common man, it is above all important to note the following fact. The element of pride lies neither in the existence of the little man as such nor in the idea of protecting or even of uplifting him; it resides in the postulate that the totality of goods available to man both material and spiritual must of necessity belong to him and to him alone and be remade for his use. Pride does not consist in the wish to help the humble, the little ones, the oppressed, the dispossessed, etc. It consists in man's determination to make a world order according to his own concepts, an order destined to serve him on all counts. But, it will be objected, where is the link between this aspiration of man as a man and the idea of a universe built to fit the stature of the common man?

The Missing Link

As a reply we shall give here only two summary indications.

1. *Men Only*

The pride of the divinized monarch, of the rich man who thinks he can buy the moon and the stars, the pride of the great land owner who imagines he has created the mountains, the pride of the artist in love with his own genius, etc.—all these ancient and limited prides existed long before Christian revelation. It is only after that revelation that we find a new pride, enhanced and universalized. To become one with the divinity it is no longer necessary to be a king, a nobleman, a genius, or a plutocrat; no, it is not even necessary to be a good man, enjoying everyone's esteem. It is only necessary to be a man.

Now this is precisely the capital point of the doctrine of the common man. It is founded on a pride freed from the restrictions inherent in accidental and contingent conditions. The common man become sovereign is man "lord of the universe"—simply because he is a man. His pretensions, far from being dependent on a social position above that of his fellows, are one and the same as all other men's pretensions. From being exceptional, the delirium of pride has become universal, and in becoming universal it has become incomparably more abstract and all-embracing. The consciousness of being "after all, only a man" is not tied to any specific limitations, there is no longer the restraint which limited and concrete cases of pride see imposed upon themselves.

But does not this cosmic pride exclude at least social pride, pride among men? In one sense, yes, in another it amplifies it. Man becomes extremely envious, morbidly jealous of every advantage and superiority which awakens in him the suspicion that his neighbor is not a standard common man. There are exceptions, as we shall see later on, for it is true that the mass of common men, although rejecting discipline and resenting intrinsic superiority, accepts real tyranny without protest.

2. *Infantile Megalomania*

We must not identify the doctrine of the common man with an idyllic cult for things small and humble, suggesting to the average man retirement within himself and abstention from worldly interests and ambitions. On the contrary, the doctrine affirms the sovereignty, the totality, the exclusiveness of the common man. He is not called to cultivate a restricted existence, a humble happiness, free from the dangers which threaten greatness and presumption. He is called upon to expropriate every form of

greatness, to govern the world, to inherit every form of presumption and to tolerate nothing outside of himself.

The ideal common man is not, for example, a friendly shoemaker who knows his craft thoroughly, who every evening eats a good meal in the midst of his family and who, drinking a bottle of wine in the company of his fellows, laughs at the king thirsting for conquest or the rich man tormented by his insatiable avarice. Far from it. The ideal common man is, first of all, rich, possessing absolute security, having at hand all the world's products, all inventions, every medical care, every climate (thanks to central heating and air conditioning). He knows statecraft and directs intelligently the course of the universe, for, of course, science has no secrets from him. He is morally perfect for he lacks neither security nor prosperity nor education (whose absence is the mother of all vices). Moreover, thanks to a universal education which leaves no talent undeveloped, he is an inventor, an artist, a scientist, a general, a poet, a genius, in a word far surpassing any genius produced by a world corrupted by privileges. He is all these things, either a little of each, or one or the other, perhaps with the help of a correspondence course. At the same time he is presumed to be a complete idiot, as we shall see later.

Is it that Jesus in saying, "Let the little children come unto me," meant "Give these little ones everything the markets of Rome contain and that the philosophers of Athens can offer and also the right to elect the next government"?

Pride of the Little

Let us sum up what we have said once again. As far as our subject is concerned, Christianity introduces this new factor. God, in virtue of His infinite and transcendent goodness and His all powerful mercy is absolutely free in regard to earthly hierarchies and can, if He so chooses, lift the little above the great. At the same time, perhaps as a result of the analogy of being which links the natural to the supernatural order, the natural order itself holds certain compensatory virtues, certain possibilities of balance on the side of things little and humble by contrast with the great imprisoned in their finite greatness.

In social equalism, the idea we have described undergoes the following transformation. The distinction between little and great, at least in everything which is essential, is only the falsification of *being*, a mark of its imperfection; this imperfection must be gradually suppressed by the suppression of the great, leaving only the little to subsist, while the little in turn must absorb and annex and in so doing magnify still further all greatness.

II. SUPERMAN

A certain pagan naturalism has as its axiom that "the weak exist in order to be devoured by the strong." But early in history it was noticed that if, by chance, the weak succeeded in grouping themselves in great numbers, and in working together, power passed over to their side and the principle originally destined to justify their oppression turned to their advantage. Naturalism can thus be made to serve the equalist idea as well as what is sometimes termed "the law of the jungle," although it is not easy to say why some of the weak of today could not become the strong of tomorrow, nor why the league of the weak should be something permanent.

Wishing's Tragic Venture

The equalist idea does not therefore really ever leave the plane of naturalism, although it makes an attempt to do so. It is always *force* that prevails but it is the force of the weak—therefore it is no longer force *only*. Moreover, the Christian inspiration, although corrupted, will leave its imprint, will impart a certain vitality, a certain depth. What will be the result? A dynamic idea, whose predominant character will always be naturalistic, but which has caught the fervor of souls stirred by their supernatural destiny, the fruits of religious experience and the light of a high moral teaching, will draw from these sources a part of its vigor and reveal their traces in its ambitious rationalism and in an emotionalism undeniably eschatological in character. Instead of pagan naturalism we are in presence of a *naturalism against nature*.

It is the heroic aberration, the tragic venture of wishing to impose upon nature a law according to which by its own dynamism it shall evolve into a supernature. The superman (nazi or not) who devours the weak is a product of this aberration. The earthly paradise of security, prosperity and universal progress, the theory of a self-healed nature, the world freed from tensions, the kingdom of the common man—these are but other products of the same aberration, much more important as they are far more comprehensive.

Now it is the concept of nature forced, so to say, to give birth to supernature, of religious piety dug deep in the immanence of natural forces and functions, of the crucifixion of human nature in the cross of its own pride, that are at the base of all socio-political totalitarianism. But beneath this presupposition a closer

and more tangible correspondence between totalitarian and equalist principles is easy to perceive.

The World of "Equals"

If the everyday world is, generally speaking, a world which is made up of the strong and the weak, the equalized world of which men dream—a world grown wise, refined, gentled, spiritualized, fit for ethereal maiden aunts, but which would at the same time fully satisfy every thirst for pleasure—presents itself necessarily to the mind as a world composed only of the weak and, consequently, impregnated and moved by *one* central force. (We shall abstain for the present from raising the question as to what the concrete nature of this unique force could be.) The great can be abolished and society be reduced to an assembly of the little, but not vice versa. We cannot all be dukes; we can all, it appears, be proletarians.

The Horse and the Rider

Those who oppose a society of unequals, a hierarchical society, have a traditional argument. The horse and the rider, they say, also form a functional unity, only you will be well advised to choose the rider's part and not that of the horse. The comparison, slightly insulting to the laboring masses, also has the virtue of being a singularly stupid argument against inequality. Is horseback riding useless or intrinsically evil? Do horses left by themselves become riders or do they remain horses? If it is better to be a man than a horse, it is also better to be the head of the clinic than the laboratory help and, if we can choose, we had better choose that rather than this. But the existence of health services is more important than the office *we* occupy in them. It seems certain that the spirit of demagoguery blinded by the passion of resentment will one day, as Chesterton predicted it would, condemn the cruelty of human beasts of prey who eat vegetables and will finally bring up the question, why make kitchen salt suffer?

However that may be, the model concept of an equal world is certainly one which calls for the elimination of all power, of all greatness, of all particular distinctions. In other words, it supposes the creation of a multitude of nonentities all like to one another and ready to be directed—by whom? Let us not simply say: By the tyrant. The word in itself has not the force of an argument and leads to misunderstanding. Let us say, courteously and without making any judgments in advance: They are ready to be directed by the whole which they themselves constitute—or by the center of their totality.

Bureaucracy and Totalitarianism

Naturally, totalitarianism is even more inevitable if we look at the practical side of the matter. Maintaining equality, or which comes to the same thing, keeping the "weak" weak, requires an administrative apparatus, we were about to say a determinative apparatus, both universal and all powerful. No liberty is possible without the natural balance of strong and weak, the organic order of things and the play of mutual limitations which it supposes. (It should be noted that this natural equilibrium does not itself supplement morality, and that without moral correctives it works out hateful results. All the same, in so far as a concrete moral order is superimposed on it, moral and spiritual determinations will enter into the very texture of power-relations.)

The totalitarian implication is hidden, or temporarily softened, rather than put aside, in the liberal systems, which are of an essentially provisional nature. Their dynamic economic and imperial expansion provides an outlet for democratic furor. Here the demand for strict equality is replaced, until further change, by the mitigated and hazy formula, *equality of opportunity*. If it is true that totalitarianism is nothing else but the final term of the evolution of liberalism, one can also characterize liberalism as the embryonic form of the totalitarian idea.

The Christian Totality

Nothing is simpler to describe than the Christian equivalent of the concept of totality; it is the idea of the ordination toward God of all things human, including inner life in its utmost depths. This ordination is bound up with the idea of an infinite and comprehensive divine superiority before which all earthly distinctions and superiorities—strength, power, riches, even virtue—seem to crumble to nothing. There is only, in effect, the Catholic concept of life which is really total. What totality signifies in the current concept is precisely the erection of the part into the whole; the usurpation by the relative of absolute experience, the destruction of finite values and the suppression of earthly distinctions (instead of their revision in the light of transcendent superiority), the enthroning of the inferior as inferior.

Totalitarianism is to Christian universalism what monism is to monotheism, what the will-as-God of Kant is to a will in conformity to God's will, what planned economy is to providence, what collective security is to Christendom. Far from disproving it, the consideration of totalitarianism confirms the thesis that modern

ideals are fundamentally Christian ideals, with the difference of a slight misunderstanding.

The Old Law and the New Law

In addressing Himself to man through the person of Christ, God gives our liberty a new dimension. If henceforward man makes use of it to accept the "yoke of Christ," there will follow a decisive extension of his liberty in regard to earthly determinations. The new and more intimate community into which he enters with God will no longer be satisfied by participation in the public worship of a social body defined in civic, local, tribal, national or imperial terms. Man acquires an inner sanctuary, conscience. He becomes a member of a visible society having its own organization defined only by the community with God which it represents and radically distinct from the social bodies of the civic order to which man continues at the same time to belong.

The liberative function of the old law—notably of the moral law as it is formulated in the Decalogue—also presupposed liberty as a fundamental element of rational nature; it also gave man a transcendent standard ever present to his mind and forming a public environment around him. This standard, being above any human will as such, opposed a limit to the tyranny of purely human authority or superiority. But the "new covenant" adds to this function of the old law a new depth and new comprehensiveness. The moral law itself, detached from the ceremonial order of the old law, acquires a higher dignity. Above the natural justice which only refers to God as the Supreme Ordinator of nature, there rises a plane of more intimate, and one may say more personal, relations between man and God. These relations tend to the integral sanctification of man rather than to his sole justification by the conformity of his conduct to an exterior law.

Viewed from a certain angle, evangelical grace is to the old law what the old law itself is to the laws of nature, to the determinism of physical necessities. The substitution for the theocratic state of the Church—super-imposed and co-ordinated to "Christian states" on which she does not depend and from which she is radically different—corresponds closely to this broadening of human personality and liberty. Without changing his nature, without ceasing to be an essentially social animal (rather he becomes more so) man leaves the framework of an existence concentrated only on the social. He will cease to be "only social" and in so far as he is social he will cease to be enclosed in society.

Humility and Freedom

To return to our subject—in the measure that God submits man to Himself, He confirms and broadens man's liberty. The more we belong to God the more we accomplish ourselves. Our liberty and our personality, gifts of God our Creator, will re-emerge, enhanced, by our answering spontaneously and wholeheartedly the call of the Love of God our Redeemer.

The dispensation of Christ, just as it purifies suffering from the tendencies to terror and despair which naturally accompany it (but without eliminating or even lessening suffering as such), does not abolish human servitudes (it adds to them rather) but takes from them whatever they have of final and total, of brutality and vileness. Every subordination of man to man becomes "transparent" in the luminous medium of a subordination to God, universal because it excepts no one, entire because it reaches the inmost depths of the soul.

In other words, it is precisely the principle "humble yourself" which puts to flight the Satanic insinuation "humble one another." It is the destruction of all human illusions affirming the independent and absolute dignity of any man in any position which gives and assures to man the dignity which becomes him. "The truth will make you free." In still other terms, the reference to God penetrating the intimate reality of our lives and not limited to an abstract belief or to a system of moral axioms, is what guarantees the dignity proper to each person as such and makes the demands of social solidarity—which are inescapably demands of subordination—capable of a balanced solution.

It is not our task to elaborate further consequences. What concerns us here is the fundamental Christian idea; the idea of God Who wishes to convert, conquer, win, the whole man as a free person ("humble yourself," not "See how I've broken your pride") and this is inseparable from God's will to increase the intangibility and amplitude of our liberty. For he who uses rightly his liberty becomes more free and better armed against attempts to enslave him, whether these attempts come from the outside or from the determinism of his own instincts. To him who humbles himself it is promised that he will become "almost like to God."

The really exorbitant ambition of God—a scandal for natural man and for the non-Christian—is to affirm His reign over free beings, who obey Him fully and from the depths of their heart and who will be "exalted" until *dii estis*. The divine call addressed to man cuts through terrestrial hierarchies in its

paradoxical preference for the little and the humble. This expresses at once a supreme affirmation of the all powerful transcendence of God and an equally radical affirmation of human liberty. The two are mutually inseparable. If we free ourselves from the royalty of God, our liberty, after an illusory upsurge perhaps, will fall to nothing.

Utopian Equalist

Social equalism, for its part, claims the right to violation of the natural order and a brutal transformation of the very constitution of human nature. It matters little whether the proposed goal is to be reached by properly violent methods or by peaceful progress and education. In the second case, the diminution of liberty is effected with less evidence, perhaps less widely and in a manner less irreparable; direct constraint is replaced in part by the supposedly automatic pressure of pre-established conditions.

It is not in the *methods* used but in the very essence of equalist utopia (and consequently in the methods which impose themselves by a more or less logical necessity) that the negation of liberty resides. The moment that we have at the center no longer an equilibrium derived from a supernatural source and superimposed on the social hierarchy, but the concept of a remaking of the natural order itself, a remaking which assures a reign of half-supernatural sublimity, the suppression (or in any case the reduction) of liberty becomes an understood thing.

First of all, to speak figuratively, all those whose height is above the average will not be invited to stoop—they will be beheaded or shortened or at least loaded with a weight which will force them to bend their backs. And, above all, the task will be to breed a race of uniformly small men.

Instead of the enrichment of being which results from the Christian claim to contain and to counter-balance, to distinguish and to multiply social superiorities, the aim will be to impoverish existence by suppressing these superiorities altogether. Finally, by substituting himself for God in a way more vicious, more profound and more ambitious than the comparatively innocent divinization of the ancient Caesars, man, ontologically incapable of creating free beings or of safeguarding their liberty when he determines them, can no longer be anything but a tyrant to himself.

Beyond Dignity's Limits

Social utopia is inseparable from unmeasured restraints, from arbitrary rules and from the reduction of man to a purely

biological level. It is also accompanied by psychological conditioning, and, in general, by determination based on mechanical models. Whenever man submits himself, wholly and from the depths of his being, to man, that is to say, whenever his submission goes beyond the limits of what is due to the purely functional authority of accidental superiorities (which man is trying to eliminate), or to God's explicit representatives, rigorously limited to communicate only God's determinations (the Church has never aspired to change human nature nor to impose a plan of social organization which would prevent man from deviating from the best way), this submission implies the abasement of man below the level of moral existence to the state of a being virtually deprived of liberty.

Just as the reign of *sovereign reason* has no use for reasonable or even reasoning beings, but requires its subjects to be conditioned at its will, so the self-determination of man demands from him a determinability which is very close to that of matter. Here, however, there arises an important objection, an objection we shall not seek, for our part, to solve thoroughly but which will end by helping our understanding of the problem. You blame the subjection of man to man. Very well, but what do you mean? Who is the subject-man and what tyrant-man has taken away his liberty? As inequality—the division of men into masters and servants—is precisely what we are suppressing, are we not faced by a domination of man by *himself* and is this not a worthwhile concept of liberty? For, in fact, the upholders of the social revolution, far from condemning all liberty, claim to establish the true liberty of man.

Collective Man

Let us avoid the easy and purely controversial replies which conservative critics too often use when attacking socialist governments or theories; these criticisms are often made in that very demagogic spirit so dear to their adversaries. Nothing is easier than to point out in a socialist regime a group of leaders, a power monopoly, a Jewish clique, an all powerful bureaucracy, etc. None of these resolves the question. For since man as such does not appear as an absolutely single and identical subject, the question is whether the tyrannical power-machine, whose presence we have noted, is not a pure instrument, a necessary and legitimate one of man's self-determination, this determination being substituted for the real inequality among men of the non-socialist and the non-democratic societies marked by *class rule* and an intrinsic order of superiorities and distinctions. If the governmental ma-

chine represents the spirit and the will of the masses, if it operates only for the benefit of these masses, is it not the ideal approximation of the concept of man, single and homogeneous, master of his own destiny?

In our opinion, a serious critic ought to attack this fundamental concept rather than expose the manifest imperfections of its practical realization. That which stifles freedom, that which degrades man to the lowest possible level, is not such and such a demagogue, despot, or insolent bureaucracy, it is the monstrous phantom of universal personified *man*, containing within himself every individual as such; and he is the more to be feared as his realization is aimed at sincerely and without consciousness of egoism. The ruling power will always be a *group*, a particular *type* imposing his imprint upon the masses. But the more sincerely idealistic it is and the more titles it possesses to identify itself with the totality of its subjects, the more oppressive its tyranny will be, and the more complete the suppression of all personal liberty.

Also, one must avoid identifying this concept of "universal man personified" with pure and simple statism, for example, paternalist absolutism. The liberal criticism which attacks the state versus the individual only scratches the surface. The socialist concept is not without an individualistic aspect and it is in virtue of this aspect that it is totalitarian. There is no question of a central power crushing and directing individuals from above, and above all from without, even for their good. We have here collectivity pretending to incarnate the mind and the will of individuals as individuals, expressing their identity of being (this pretension is absent from simple statism). This is the reason why the so-called "personalist" ideologies are susceptible of an evolution toward collectivist "identitarianism."

What matters above all is that the individual in collectivism is not called upon simply to obey orders emanating from the central power; he is supposed to adapt himself—to think, to feel, to wish, to live—in such a way that these orders, whether viewed in themselves or as part of the whole, seem to emanate from his own person. Once again, the "man-god" is not the state or an administrative board, he is man considered as the unit whose reflected image shines forth from each individual.

Psychic Obsession

Let us sum up the idea of equalist identitarianism in the following formula. *Man* will no longer mean multiplicity of per-

sons united by an objective order of common relations, reciprocal obligations and solidarity; *man* will be the one single subject of human action and human destiny. Individual people will be like portraits of the collective man, expressions of him, all alike except for diversified functions determined by biological specifications. Liberty is suppressed the moment that there is no longer any possibility left to escape unlimited determination by the collective man, into whom one disappears as soon as every right and every privacy reserved to the individual disappear; that is to say, everything which cannot be absorbed in the fullness of the representative man.

This radical subversion of the metaphysical order of nature will necessarily translate itself into a system of oppression, violence, extermination, tangible, visible, and endless psychic obsession, whatever be the particular group acting as its chief agent. In this sense, we can rightly say this subversion signifies the elimination of liberty.

Man's Cosmic Status

To the negation or suppression of intrinsic values and to the universal man, we may add a third factor that shows the ontological situation, or, in other words, the *cosmic status* of man. To the subversion of the natural order, to the claim of an excessive liberty for man as a collective subject, will be joined the complementary negation of spiritual liberty and the recourse to absolute necessity postulated by physical determinism.

Man, always as a collective entity, is free to do anything he chooses; he can overthrow every institution, break every tradition, invent new cultures, define what is a need and what is not, change fundamental principles of morality, manufacture individual temperaments according to a preconceived plan, transform women into men, and what not. But this liberty itself will be acquired thanks to the necessary operation of blind "laws of nature" and man's own actions will be based on a scientific knowledge of necessity, linked to the science of physical phenomena (or even forming part of the latter, which would mark the ideal triumph of progress). We have here an insoluble contradiction; the slavery of determinism will not take long to stifle one day the orgy of the anarchic pseudo liberty of social activism whose tragedy is played before our eyes.

Meanwhile it is well to insist on the psychological link of these two contradictory aspects. It is certain that in denying formal differences, in reducing all realities to the regular play of

mechanical forces, in limiting our consideration to that which can be determined by extrinsic calculations, we can increase our power over things, and it is liberty thus understood which fascinates the adepts of progress.

Let us draw a parallel between this attitude and that of falsified Christianity. "Seek first the kingdom of God . . . and all the rest shall be added unto you." Man is therefore called to possess "all the rest." Why not skip the intermediary steps and, treating the first part of the saying as a verbal precaution, throw ourselves upon the promised booty? But we must ask ourselves at what point the equalist bias has entered in. It is really quite simple.

Mechanical Formulae

To defy the natural order which implies social inequality, and to make this defiance something more than pure wishful thinking, recourse is had to the fiction of another natural order plunged in *mechanical* necessity, made up of universal force-quantities and from which a subversion of nature is deduced as being necessitated by the irresistible play of the forces of nature herself. It is the analysis of social reality—not contemplative, formal or phenomenological analysis, but a reductive and *mechanistic* one—which will uproot inequalities, do away with their reason to exist and prepare the new creation of society on the plane of equalist atomism.

Exit the "Boss"

On the other hand, the idea of domination founded on the "knowledge of necessity" can only stimulate equalism in so far as it postulates a universal man who must in no way be held in check by other free individuals, by multiplicity or division in his own self. In a still more specific sense liberty which rests on the knowledge of necessity corresponds exactly to the concept of a supreme and all-powerful force deriving from the union of the weak. The mass of little men triumphing by their *number* is the ultimate victory of mechanical necessity and even of mathematical intelligibility.

The common man, empty of qualities, the terminal representative of human littleness, must inaugurate his reign as inevitably "as the sun succeeds the night!" (We borrow the comparison from an English revolutionary song: "that the boss's day is done, and the workers' day is coming as the rising of the sun.")

Futile Vestige of Liberty

We shall return later to the problem of the virtual suppression of liberty in liberal democracy itself. It is the empire of the

common man which (without speaking of its foreshadowing in the medieval and Protestant heresies) commences really with the "Rights of Man," and traverses rapidly the stages of universal suffrage and "the advent of the masses" to fulfill itself in the communist paradise, where every concept of individual rights has lost all meaning. The abstract and equalized citizen of liberal democracy is but the embryonic form of the collective man, of the solitary omnipresent god who will fill the world's stage when the millennium is achieved.

Let us content ourselves at present with drawing attention to the general tendencies of uniformity, mechanization, quantification, centralization, naturalistic and idealistic abstractions (each individual is a "unit of interest and reason"; economic man and citizen) which dominate the liberal-democratic milieu without the Marxist workers' movement even entering the scene. The metaphysical indetermination and the infinite determination of man, the nihilistic concept of his virtual omnipotence and his corresponding abasement to the rank of a quantum, the equalist reduction of his qualitative riches—these are not the original inventions of communism but rather the media from which it rises. Assuredly it brings new elements; they are no other than the fixation and totalization of what was already present in liberal democracy but in a diffused state and inhibited by futile vestiges, that is to say, vestiges of authentic Christianity and natural humanity which the liberal democratic system, by itself, is unable to do away with completely, and on which to a certain extent it is obliged to lean, seeing its abstract nudity, its intrinsic inaptitude for direction and co-ordination, its lack of vitality and its inward division.

The totalitarian tyranny, by bringing to a happy end the work of democratization (at the price, of course, of renouncing the amenities of liberal civilization and constitutional government) will complete the work of liberal democracy while sweeping away its aged structure. It will give the headless corpse of equalized man a new artificial head, a formidable apparatus of co-ordinative activity. By continuing the very movement which has given birth to and animated that which it replaces, in erecting the formless liberal being into a colossal and tangible *form*, the totalitarian tyranny will incarnate the inmost soul of the so-called individualist system to which, according to current and superficial ideas, it will succeed only as a new creation or as a contrary extreme.

III. ERSATZ VIRTUES

The divergence between the Christian rectification and the equalist suppression of inequalities can be contrasted with the parallel between charity and justice. To use a simplified formula, the Christian appeal exhorts the rich to help the poor by a free gift; the equalist concept is ready to take away from the rich that which he unjustly retains and to claim, in the name of the poor, that which is their due. Charity on one side, justice on the other. We await a bettering of the slave's condition from his master's kindness, or we fight for it by curing the slave of his stupid docility. We place our confidence in the first instance in the weakness of the strong, in the second instance in the strength, once it is awakened, of the weak.

We have here what is perhaps the most attractive aspect of equalism for intelligent minds who cherish the rational evidence and austere rigor associated with the concept of justice while they despise sentimental softness and the glorification of instincts and whims, even tinted with a shade of kindness. Indeed, whenever strict justice is called for by the nature of a situation, it must be neither overruled nor replaced by charity; this would mean an abasement to amoralism and irrationalism rather than a superior morality.

Suppose that I owe a rich man money; my moral sense is deeply perverted if, taking a charitable (in the technical and psychological sense) point of view I say, "Certainly, I won't keep this sum of money which is not mine; however, instead of giving it back to you, I will give it to a poor man who needs it far more than you do." Suppose now that I owe a poor man something; my action will be falsely motivated if I give him back what I owe him with the main intention of helping him or of being agreeable to him (which would be the implicit negation of my strict duty to give him back that to which he has a right). Charity—in a wide sense, comprising sympathy, affability, kindly dispositions, spontaneous likings, etc.—is certainly something which surpasses and overflows justice, but which is at the same time, under other aspects, inferior to justice.

Exquisite Charity and Precise Justice

The exquisite charity of a saint scarcely allows his justice to appear, not because it derogates from it but because it is infinitely more characteristic of him. His justice will apparently not be greater than that of an honest tradesman, or at least of a virtuous and cultured pagan; it will even be less carefully

emphasized and exhibited. At the same time, a simple person ruled by instincts and not living on the plane of conscious morality, will show rudiments of charity much more easily than rudiments of justice.

Justice enters less than charity into the higher regions of moral perfection but it is more characteristic of morality in itself. In complex moral situations, practical reason is often placed before the difficult task of reconciling charity with justice. But it possesses two certain truths on the matter: 1) that strict justice represents only an insufficient minimum in itself and needs to be completed by wider and more flexible principles, above all in cases calling for distributive justice and that, moreover, one is obliged to look higher than to the observation of the rules of justice, that is to say, to the practice of charity in its different forms which even determines certain precise and concrete duties; 2) that strict justice when it is applicable, must always be rejected, its eviction by a supposedly superior point of view being wholly illegitimate.

The Giant's Step

Now it is false to say that social equalism is lacking entirely in charity, and that its central power is thirst for justice. This appearance arises from the fact that equalism rejects the appeal to the mercy of the powerful and the liberality of the rich, that it makes fun of any appreciation of the spontaneous kindness or morality of the individual and insists upon establishing a rigorous and universal order excluding both favors and privileges. All the same, as equalism undoubtedly claims to work for the well-being, the prosperity, the culture, the progress of humanity, promising thus to overwhelm man with favors without regarding what is due to him, it reveals thus an attitude which is more in keeping with charity than justice.

Every socialist regime is notably *paternalist* in so far as it aspires to make man happy even against his will; it recalls charity rather than justice in so far as it attaches more importance to the unity and solidarity of the whole than to the respect of the rights of such and such an individual or particular group, and that it dreams of the final elimination of the tensions and servilities inherent in social existence. From Christian charity to class solidarity and collective man there is only a step, a giant's step, it is true; it is the step that leads from the injunctions, "Love God above all" and "Love thy neighbor as thyself," to the message "Thou belongest to society, the only divinity which exists; thou art bound to thy neighbor who is one with thee in this same divinity."

Pseudo Justice

Having noted the presence of a pseudo charity, let us now see why equalist justice is pseudo justice. The error rests on the identification of justice with rigor and exactitude. Neither strict ruling as such nor the "exact" form of an attribution as such has anything to do with justice. The expression "precise" in no way guarantees, in itself, the realization of objective justice. More so, just as by forcing the precision of language I inevitably fall into error, so applying strict justice to a matter when it has no objective place, I cannot but commit, in the proper sense of the term, an injustice. For example, by stating that social inequality is unjust and depriving the rich man of his property in the name of justice I violate justice in its most concrete, elementary and evident form.

One may object, first, that the rich man's present possessions suppose a past injustice, and second, that with a just order once established, even if by revolutionary acts which imply some passing injustices, there will be no more expropriations. But these considerations, which we shall let alone for the moment, do not change the fact that in the name of a forced, dubious and problematic notion of justice I have denied justice when it is most valid, evident and nearest to the notion of "commutative" justice which forbids us to take away our neighbors' goods and orders equal values to be given in exchange for them, outside of the case of free unilateral gifts.

We shall not touch here a lot of thorny problems connected with this subject, such as the prerogatives of the state touching taxation or forced expropriation, which derive from the primacy of public good, but which are directed to the conservation not to the subversion of property.

What is important to see clearly is the contempt of equalism for *commutative justice as an axiom of individual conduct* and its haste to replace it with a *just order of things*, that is to say a distributive justice which would not complete commutative justice (the most evidently obligatory for us) but would rather amount to a new creation of society, a principle of entitative determination, a form of divine justice itself.

Spoiled Child of Power

Thus it is justice which by its comprehensive character rigorously surpasses the competence of all human justice, and is as injurious to the rights of God as to those of the rich or, more exactly, of the human person whose concept embraces much more than the right not to possess less than one's neighbors. An illusory

justice, in a word, at the bottom of which lurks man's claim to omnipotence and the identification of himself with God. It is easy, at the same time, to see its connections with the mirages of universal security, collective security, the right to prosperity, etc. Justice is equated here to man's desire to be the spoiled child of an all-embracing power, of a gigantic nurse uniquely designed to feed his desires without a possible hitch; an identification between desires and rights which is in itself the negation of all justice properly understood.

One also perceives the relations between this false concept of justice and the general tendencies of all socialism (including progressivist democracy and similar tendencies in "social catholicism"). Personal morality is rendered superfluous, and empty of meaning; it is replaced by an order of things which necessarily and according to an infallible plan guarantees a perfect moral condition in human lives and in their mutual relations. Beneath the label of this pseudo justice, a radical contempt for all true and concrete justice is instilled into the "human material" whose poverty inspires the planning vision of the ideologists and serves as the instrument of its realization.

The agitator teaches the poor man that it is his right and his duty to despise and to curse the rich in every possible way, to interpret their very existence as the fruit and expression of injustice; to suspect and to greet with sarcasm every act of generosity on the part of the rich man; to identify his own interests with those of justice, that is to say to repudiate the attitude which is the basis of all just conduct. He is to regard himself as the sole *productive* agent of the riches and civilization which the rich man afterwards expropriates; he is to consider himself as the creator and servant of a world of values plundered by the parasites of the ruling classes (a scourge arising from human imperfection which must be abolished). Finally, he must accord no respect to his poor brethren unless they agree with his point of view and are also formed by the spiritual direction of the agitator.

Real Injustices

Let us add that the unequal distribution of goods, power and social prestige in civilizations is generally the cause of injustices, more or less typical and frequent, and that this is hard on the poorer classes and the poor. The injustices are not the inequalities themselves but are grafted upon them and the rich or the powerful are often tempted to commit them. There can be cases of undoubted injustice, as when the law favors the corrupt rich, or

modifies itself from fear of an overlord, or again when the rich take advantage of their position to oppress the poor.

There is, moreover, a *radiation* of inequalities, distinct from but hard to separate from their very existence. There is a natural tendency to heap advantages on social rank, illustrated by the psychological fact that one lends money to the rich more willingly than to the poor, or once again, by the economic fact that the rich thanks to the foresight which their means allows them, are able to buy certain objects of common necessity more cheaply than the poor can do.

The fight against these characteristic injustices and the efforts to prevent them or to compensate the tendency of privileges to grow stronger and stronger, must not be confused with the equalist interpretation of justice. The latter attacks *the principle of social inequality as such*, behind which it aims also at natural inequality. For this ideal, a suppression of injustices which establish partial equality is only valuable as a step toward integral equality, understood as the synonym of integral justice. If a certain limited equality signifies a proximate justice, total equality must signify the consummation of justice. In many ways this type of reasoning is dear to the grade-school mentality which characterizes the exponents of an earthly paradise.

Tyranny Prefigured by Democracy

Let us add that the confusion concerning justice, although more evident and easier to detect in socialism, is also present in liberal democratism. The total equality of citizens, which must be carefully distinguished from the participation of the people in the government and the acknowledged dignity of the human person, results in a tyranny far less monstrous and in a less evident negation of justice than the equality of comrades. But not only does the former prefigure the latter, it operates with the same conceptual mechanisms, and implies the same sophisms. The common man is a mixture of citizen and comrade, a transitional form.

However, the socio-political depossession of the aristocrats who were the privileged in the old sense of the term, as contrasted with the modern privileged against whom the standard bearers of the common man battle, was less opposed to elementary justice than is the expropriation of the bourgeois. Material property is a personal possession in a much more manifest sense than social rank or political prerogatives.

In abstaining, generally speaking, from creating a new and artificial economic order, liberal democratism certainly gives proof of moderation—let us say of provisional moderation. Joined to this is the illusion of a clear separation between economic and political spheres, the characteristic illusion of the *free-trade* world. The totalitarianism which succeeds it incorporates the whole economic order within the sphere of political power, which is no less unnatural, and infinitely less compatible with any high civilization.

It is none the less true that liberal democratism also rests on the negation of any distinction of social *status* and of any independent social power, that is to say any hierarchical relation as such. It only admits relations of subordination which derive from general consent conceived on the basis of the strict equality of citizens, with the exception of those relations which, purely free and contractual, originate in the inequality of possessions interpreted as a given fact of nature. Liberal democratism also postulates a just social order made by man the "creator" of the world in which he lives, and this justice also is strictly assimilated to the principle of equality.

The order of distributive justice is reduced to a fictitious principle of commutative justice, the fantasy named "social contract." This is the stratagem which allows the principle of equality—which is always present in a limited sense wherever commutative justice intervenes—to be transferred to the general plane of society conceived as a moral unit. In this concept also it is the just order established once for all which is supposed to guarantee a just administration. The *virtue* of justice, its connection with the qualities of governing personnel, is left out of consideration—in so far, at least, as the systematic and original idea is concerned. The rulers, who in this concept are a survival of the tyrants of the old regime, are presupposed to be intrinsically evil; for at least in its vigorous and living forms, optimistic humanitarianism cannot do without its manichean complement.

But the constitutional guarantees are there to hold in check the governing group and to restrain it. On the other hand, under the communist dispensation, the governing class is necessarily good because it materially represents the people as supreme, and hates all which does not come from the common man. But the question of their justice as a qualitative element counts even less. What are here the manichean complements? The enemy is virtually always there, not only in the foreign countries, still dominated by capitalism and religious superstition, but also in

the almost universal instinct for personal property, which would give birth to a new capitalism if vigilance were relaxed.

Roots of the Myth

These considerations now allow us to grasp the metaphysical roots of the equalist myth, and from there, better to understand its exclusion of charity (whose counterfeit it retains, although the abuse and deformation of the idea of justice are associated with a formal repudiation of charity), and its cult for hatred—two integrating aspects of this myth.

All justice, in the proper and strict sense of the word, and in particular commutative justice, although supposing the existence of love, postulates secondarily a methodological exclusion of love. It is impossible to practice, or better, to conceive of justice in relation to a given situation without making abstraction of love. This is why, in every relation where love is present not only "radically" as a universal supposition but in a distinctive and particular sense, justice will be of little importance. In a healthy, happy family for example, the "exact equivalent of services rendered" has really no place! All the same, every human relationship remains within the category of justice and circumstances may arise where it will become applicable.

Love and justice in regard to the same object do not exclude one another. For example, when a concrete disagreement arises between two persons I love, each with a particular and distinctive love, I must not allow my judgment of right and wrong to depend on the greater love I feel for one or the other of them. This is true even though I may be more preoccupied by the good of the person I love best, even if he or she is in the wrong.

It is easy to see how all justice implies a certain postulate of equality, not the affirmation of an equality of nature or value, or even an equality of rights in a general sense, but precisely an abstraction from the inequalities it is not my business to judge. It would be unjust to deny that Peter is obliged to repay a loan to John because Peter has a higher social rank or is a more distinguished or cultivated man, or even because he has a more noble moral character than John.

The Obsession of Leveling

On the other hand the passion to introduce equality everywhere will drive me to unjust judgments (it is inadmissible that such or such a race, category, or class of men should be in any important way inferior to others—excepting of course the category of the intolerant who uphold such prejudices). The obsession of

leveling is also going to make me commit gross practical injustices. The idealists of subversion are not in love with justice; what inspires them is not the moral rectitude to which injustice is repugnant wherever found, it is the vision of a *global plan of justice* fixing at one stroke all human relations in virtue of a master operation of reason embracing the totality of existence. They are in love not with justice but with power, not with the respect for limits which justice implies but with the unlimited greatness man attributes to himself once he believes himself to be God.

It is this deformation of the concept of justice into one sole act of distributive justice, that is to say, justice creating an order, which expresses itself necessarily in absolute equality, that is the *total abstraction* of inequalities which are natural and inherent in the social order. Whether it is a judgment or a decision the main point of view will always be to put aside as far as possible any consideration of the differential qualities, characteristics and antecedents of men. The only authentic reality will be man alone, the common man in his indetermination, his nudity, his absolute lack of features, the "nought which can and wishes to be all" (if one expert is clothed with a magical prestige it is because experts can be made on the assembly line).



Joe Carpenter, alas, has swung

This motto in his shop:

"At the bottom of the ladder

Is a free trip to the top!"

IV. CONTRADICTIONS

To deny all is to covet all; to love nothing is to desire everything, to be nothing is to aspire to everything—this is approximately the secret of the great post-Christian adventure of anti-Christianity. Man having no concrete and particular nature, no form with its corresponding limits, if he is capable of willing can will everything. His aspiration, having no appropriate basis lacks a term. If he has two cars, he will feel the need of three and it is the realization of this dream which will (under the title of "progress" or "prosperity") give a meaning to his life.

The axiom of the infinitude, the indetermination of will, this so-called principle of an unlimited urge to live, this imperative to grab whatever one can (riches, power, culture or other perfections, all reducible to a common denominator), this is a supposition which dominates modern times since the Renaissance and "the emancipation of man" when the princes cast away the yoke of moral prejudices. We have here the starting point of the equalist postulate which seems, as it were, rigorously binding; every privilege seeming to be, not without reason, a stain of imperfection and an irrational lack of symmetry.

This infantile will to obtain everything, humanitarian philosophy attributes to man as an evident characteristic of the *reasonable*. From it can be deduced the classical axiom of liberalism, everyone is free to do anything, this principle being limited only by "the identical liberty of others" to do the same thing, and again the standard interpretation of the constitutional government as a mechanism of reciprocal restraints. One can also deduce from it the principle of free trade within the framework of a formal juridical order as well as the particularly comic ideal of "equality of opportunity" allowing anyone to "get to the top" at any moment. Here is enough to steep the minds of all in the illusion (the parody, perhaps, of the faith in miracles, and the afterglow of the heroic furor which animates progressivist democratism) that all are on the top at the same time. The swarming side by side of infinite wills expresses virtually from the beginning their ultimate identity in that nothingness to which man has turned since he has denied Christ. But this also represents the stir produced in man's nature by the contact of the supernatural and the impulsion which having lost its source and its meaning now serves man to glorify his impurity and deepen his fall. These essentially unquenchable desires which swell the natural appetite to an unnatural voracity, know neither choice nor

mit. They are fatally destined to devour each other or, which comes to the same thing, they are fated to melt themselves really and tangibly into one collective will. The sovereign subjects of the liberal world are coagulated into a formless jelly, lost in the bottomless depths of the One Universal Man, the lying substitute of the absolute being he wishes to become and whose terrible soliloquy, last act of the post-Christian drama, fills the totalitarian scene.

The Inertia of the Common Man

One will not be slow to object that the philistine idol of the common man does not seem to have an infinite will. We must not confuse infinite will and intense will. The mark of infinitude does not apply to intensity but to the extension, the amplitude of the will's field of action. The common man, in so far as he exists, man as a particle of the masses, is distinguished by cowardice, slackness, lack of initiative, rather than by strength of will. Better than that, a certain sheeplike innocence, a lazy lawn, are not foreign to the standard ideal of the common man who, according to his loquacious interpreters, only wants his modest earthly paradise and the reasonable assurance that the troubles he hasn't sought won't come to afflict him.

But the helpless will of a child does not prevent him from wanting the moon and the stars as playthings, above all if he has been told that he has a right to have them. This is precisely what is expressed in the superb slogan, *freedom from want*, the most ingenious imposture perhaps ever invented by the charlatans of democracy. The deep theoretical significance of this formula resides in the fact that it expresses less the craving for every imaginable good than the fear of being deprived of anything one might covet, which characterizes the spoiled herds of modern half-men. The older, coarser formula, *abundance for all*, does not give this impression of an abstract terror of unsatisfaction, nor its assimilation to the idea of tyranny, of oppression. This, in connection with the cult of the common man, marks the moral downfall of liberal democracy and its growing disposition to coordinate itself to totalitarian socialism.

The central point of equalism, of the confusion between justice and unlimited, indeterminate desire, is the indignation the common man feels, and above all which is preached to him, at the thought of someone's being able to possess something (including cultural treasures) which he, for his part, does not possess. But joined to this is also indignation against imperfections or ills which have not yet been corrected or cured. Pure progressivist

equalism does not stop at social injustices properly so-called. I upholds man's *rights* to peace, happiness, long life, artistic creation, to a good conscience, etc.; briefly his right to be free from any harmful restraint and in the last resort to be God's equal (Whether God's existence is admitted or not matters very little. His idea is always active and even the more one denies Him, the more one tries to become Him.) To sum up, collective inertia and the dogma of unlimited desires only constitute complementary aspects of the same nihilisms, born from the first reaction of pride against the shock of redemption.

Hatred's Mask

The spirit of hatred and the repudiation of charity—as a fundamental and *universal* attitude—which so profoundly mark social equalism, necessarily follow the metaphysical concept of activist nihilism, the axiom of unlimited and indeterminate will and the deformation of the idea of justice attached to it. By interpreting ontological imperfections—as far as my interests in the broadest sense of the term suffer from them—as consequences of an injustice imposed for someone's profit, I make hatred the fundamental mode of my attitude toward the ontological order itself.

In practice this metaphysical hatred is often represented or masked by a concrete hatred, legitimate or at least natural to man and aroused by such and such well defined injustice or enmity *hic et nunc*.

The spirit of charity, on the contrary, is essentially conscious of the change and contingency inherent in a world of finite beings as also of the illusory nature of any belief in the possibility of an innate harmony in the universe, especially a fallen universe. Instead of efforts tending to make redemption *useless* or *outclassed* (or *utilizing* its fruits for a universal and arbitrary remaking of a natural humanity as such) the spirit of charity invites co-operation with the redemptive work by substantially supernatural acts directed to positive goals of perfection, but more respectful of concrete natures in all their imperfections than a naturalistic illuminism could or would ever be.

True Charity

In it could be none of the distinctive aspects of charity in the proper sense of the term—for example, to renounce a right without insulting commutative justice or wishing to abolish the juridical order, to give someone something without proclaiming his right to the benefit he has received, to love one's neighbors before one's brothers in the South Seas, to sow without assuring

oneself of the harvest; to do good without exacting the same goodness from everyone as if it were a law of nature, to seize the opportunity to procure a legitimate happiness here and now rather than to work for the uniform happiness, guaranteed secure from all trouble, of mankind; to love that which does not resemble us, to give oneself rather than adapt oneself, to serve rather than simulate, to efface oneself rather than identify oneself, to humble oneself rather than lower one's standards, to humble oneself before the humble rather than to inspire them with pride, to love the victim rather than hate the aggressor, to hate injustice rather than be irritated by imperfections and slowness. To sum up, the spirit of charity is above all a wish rather to imitate the charity of Christ than to pretend to supersede for divine order a better order.

There is not one of these aspects of charity which is not a scandal and a folly in the eyes of the professors of an equalist gospel. Needless to mention the totalitarians in the strict sense, for them the very mention of the word "charity" is an abomination and the slightest attitude of generosity—outside of political calculations and the mania for power—is a contemptible weakness which smells of counter-revolution.

In the liberal democratic world, which is only virtually totalitarian, the term charity in its debased sense is appreciated. It signifies organized welfare works destined above all to efface the ugly stain of mendacity and to improve the social productivity of the human material.

Double-Talk Formulae

Let us rapidly review some formulae which are current among us and which deal with charity. They always mention the conquest of something—rights, bread, health, culture, happiness—never renunciation (for example, the Western working man must interest himself intensely in the efforts of the Chinese people to throw off the yoke of the feudal lords; but he is rarely invited voluntarily to lower his own living standards to contribute to the raising of those of the Chinese workmen).

The only renunciations demanded will be of certain pleasures supposed to be harmful, like alcohol, whose consumption devours every year so many millions which could be used to increase the number of movie houses. No sacrifice is asked without the accompanying promise of a swift and sure reward. War, which is necessary as one has been the victim of an aggression, must necessarily bring us a better world (that is to say no

more wars, two cars instead of one and a world fit for heroes to live in, otherwise the game wasn't worth the candle).

In general, all desires are shown as mutually compatible: artistic sublimity and enlightened self-interest coincide. The equalization of economic levels and the abolition of the class regime must at the same time make work more productive, and non-violence if seriously applied would be more effective than armed resistance; the more prosperous a people becomes the higher its cultural standing; the new sexual morality is not only more pleasant but more pure than the prejudices of yesterday; social progress is among other things true Christianity; a good writer is easy to read and the people can understand him (but he can also satisfy the need for equality by being inherently incomprehensible).

It is a curious abnormality that our progressive domination of material forces is still not completed by an equally advanced control of spiritual and moral energies (but this will come). The world is one world, peace is indivisible, everything is for me and in order that my own security be perfectly assured, all humanity must be utterly happy. To love our enemies is to establish a mechanism which allows no one to become our enemy. "Blessed are the peacemakers." We are going to provide for peace so that it will become impossible not to be pacific. Thus we love our enemies of yesterday; we free them from their ruling classes which until now by the most scandalous of all abuses have *thought for them* and we re-educate them in order that henceforward they may follow *their own will* which cannot but be identical with ours.

Tolerance and Indifferentism

But isn't religious tolerance the height of evangelical love according to an improved and perfected version of the latter?

This tolerance is but the corollary of the fundamental atheism of modern ideology whose dogma affirms the indifference and the purely decorative function of religious beliefs. Charity toward infidels is practiced by missionaries who sacrifice themselves to bring truth to those who do not possess it, who risk their lives to serve those who are in error without pretending that those errors are just another and equivalent expression of the truth.

Civic tolerance is another matter; it constitutes a useful, and usually just, expedient, though not a characteristic fruit of charity. The modern cult of tolerance is quite distinct from this. It does not content itself with repudiating forced conversions, it tends to glorify religious indifference. The peaceful co-existence of my

ds of sects is in no way a miracle of love, it is the expression of religious indifference, of the unitarian belief in the insignificance of religious creeds, of a predominant *faith* whose only content is the equal value of all forms of faith. God *consists* in the mental ideal that each one can adore in his own way (and represent Him in any way he wants).

In the essential sense, that is to say in a sense detached from religious imagination and conventional phraseology, the typical man of the liberal democratic world is far less capable of religious tolerance than most any other human type. It is far more difficult for him to understand that someone can disbelieve in democracy than it is for a Catholic to understand a heretic or unbeliever, than it is for a communist to allow the existence of his adversaries, bourgeois, saboteurs or deviationists, whose presence he expects almost everywhere. A naive faith in the evidence of his own utilitarianism, which can only escape a handful of kings, feudal lords, junkers, prelates, industrial magnates, etc., who furnish him with his necessary demonology (as also temporarily the backward masses not yet enlightened) is a distinctive mark of the common man of Western optimistic democracy.

It has been said that in liberal democratic society there are many religions but only one sauce. Now it is the identity of the sauce, of indifferent and indetermined quality, which is the thing that matters, and which holds together the ornamental chaos of religions. For juridical formalism as the principle of social cohesion (the world of the citizen) evolves necessarily toward quantitative uniformity (the world of the common man) whose principle is material or semi-material utility of manners, fashions and standards of all types. It is certainly not a world inspired by integrity; at the most one can say that it is established not so much by a refusal of the precept of charity, as on the negation of charity's essential presuppositions.



**How much we take upon ourselves
If cheerfully we aim
To change a social order
Which God may keep the same.**

V. A WORLD WITHOUT MERCY

But that which has never, even verbally, been borrowed from the Christian inheritance by the pseudo gospel of progressive equalism is the motif of *mercy*. One can recognize the more or less hidden adversary of Christ, even if he praises Him and speaks vaguely of charity and love, by his mistrust for the Blessed Virgin and the fact that he dislikes mercy.

The manichean and puritanical hatred for Mary, a hatred which ultimately means the "scandal" of the Incarnation, forms a unity of style with sarcasm and contempt toward mercy. One can more easily adopt a *correct* attitude toward God disguised as an impersonal abstraction, or even toward Jesus dressed up as a schoolteacher or a pacifist preacher, than toward His Blessed Mother who delivered no teachings (or even toward Rome, though one may be grateful for the artistic creations inspired by the Madonna or patronized by the papacy).

In like manner, one is ready to come to terms with *love* (which can signify the platonist or naturalist idea of Eros), with *compassion* (translated as sympathy which designates an identity of psychic states), with *solidarity*, even with *charity* (which in modern language is more or less synonymous with welfare work or indulgence, and as a word, at least, does not necessarily trouble a humanitarian atmosphere).

But *mercy* is another matter. For it evokes the idea of misery of the moral distress and metaphysical fragility of man, his great need for something which is essentially above and beyond his rights. What is even more serious, mercy evokes the idea of a sort of vertical slant in men's relations, a sort of reflection of the relations between man and God, and this is difficult to conciliate with the cult for equality. Mercy? It suggests that we are unable to escape universally and definitively from a condition which has something miserable about it; it suggests that this world is as it remains (despite obligatory medical insurance) a "valley of tears."

Mercy? In practicing it I give a free gift and place myself above my neighbor; in receiving it, I receive an alms, I accept a "tip," I place myself in the dependence of an overlord. And this is outrageously medieval—the relic of an age that did not know human dignity, nor the modern popular press, nor the movies, nor the ideal of "perfect adaptation" to surrounding conditions, nor the manner in which a modern factory hand spends his day, nor our pride in belonging to the "masses," nor the sublimity of our idioms and current abbreviations, not even the delicate treatment of "human material" which distinguished the nazi regime.

the careful respect for the human person which characterizes Soviet administration. A merciful man is, above all, guilty of wishing to mitigate the symptoms of a defective organization instead of resolving the social problem, wishing to relieve the pain of the incurably sick instead of eliminating sickness from the world.

Mercy and Inequality

From our point of view mercy reveals better than anything else the central intention of Christian love; first of all because it proposes a vision of man entirely in conformity with his real metaphysical situation, stripped of any humanitarian or totalitarian illusion; secondly, because it addresses itself to the concrete person as such, without being essentially ordered to the perfectionment of a mechanism of social relations; finally, because it is in line with divine mercy and co-operates intentionally with redemption, uniting in this way the maximum "imitation of God" by man (in conformity with Christ's message) and the minimum of man's pretensions to "substitute oneself for God."

Although it is a great mistake to confuse mercy with the *descension* of the replete master toward the servile inferior, it is quite true that it underlines the essential inequality of human conditions and that it works *from above* without tending to level inequalities. The rich man who frees the poor man from an obligation, or gives him something he needs, does not systematically share his belongings with him and above all does not dream of a general sharing of possessions; the healthy person who nurses a tubercular patient with great devotion does not offer him one of his lungs in exchange for his sick lung; he who forgives a sinner, even if he admits that he is a sinner himself, does not engage in bringing about an equal distribution of virtues and vices between the sinner and himself.

Nevertheless, while maintaining inequality (even stressing it in a certain sense) mercy transcends it radically by placing man in the perspective of inequality between God and man—a shocking inequality which reflects itself in a certain manner in the super-elevation man can acquire in virtue, precisely, of his littleness, his poverty, his destitution, his physical and even his moral misery.

It is mercy and mercy alone which goes beyond any interpersonal hierarchy and all the objectifications by which man constructs his fragile and perishable world. Far from humiliating man in regard to his benefactor, it is mercy that reaches and confirms man in his character as a person, for "God is nearer to man

than man is to himself," and the merciful man more than any other human agent makes himself, while humbling himself, the participant of divine charity and the vehicle of Christ's presence.

But any attitude whose first object is the reduction of hierarchies, natural as well as social (they are distinct but interdependent), is incompatible with mercy, whatever may be the effects of mercy on social organization. From its point of view equalism has every reason to reject mercy; it proves thereby that it represents not an accidental deformation but a profound perversion of the Christian conscience. In the last analysis, this perversion corresponds rather to a negative reaction of fallen nature, persevering in pride and concupiscence, and to a refusal of the Gospel message and the Cross.

Error of Social Christianity

All those, and there are many Catholics among them, who see in the equalist subversion a *practical* Christianity although it be a secularized Christianity, those who view it as Christianity taken seriously, at last being realized, are victims of a confusion which although more or less comprehensible is none the less dangerous.

To realize Christianity, to execute a social program which one pretends to derive from it, is practically to endeavor to anticipate and ensure by governmental measures the likely *effects* of Christian morality living in men's hearts, in so far as these effects are judged salutary from the point of view of social utilitarianism which in itself has nothing to do with Christianity. The concept rests on a *petitio principii*; it gives to understand as self-evident that religion can have no other sense than that of bringing about social prosperity and harmony and that Jesus was essentially a social reformer. Essentially, not exclusively, for the miracles and evangelical mysteries constitute in themselves a useful support for the sublime morality which is seen, in its term, through the social fruits which are the result of its triumph. Without that Christianity would be only vain rhetoric, a magical or esthetic pastime, an innocent sentimentalism reserved for Sunday and effecting in no way the context of real everyday life.

We judge it useless to refute this enormous mistake about Christianity and reality itself. Let us merely remark that those who profess it are already won over to the adversary's side although for such and such a reason they wish to defend Christianity against the reproach of being opposed to progress, indifferent to the interests of the masses, etc. To wish to realize Christianity by displacing its center of gravity to its political and

ial applications is simply to reject it; it is something like the objects to create culture by engaging artists to serve the people. The truth is that the realization of Christianity in relation to man's socio-political being consists above all in the existence of the Church and the mutual compenetration of civil and ecclesiastical society. The application of Christian directives to political and economic organization, the radiation of the Christian way of life in the purely temporal domain, however important, only enter into the concept of a realization of Christianity as secondary and accessory.

Toward a Courageous Confession

It is necessary also to uphold this consideration against certain ideologies of the Right—the old style traditionalism of the *one and altar* type, the platonist interpretation of society as a biological *organism*, as also certain recent over-estimations of corporatism.

If Christian democrats are wrong in accepting directly—though their acceptance is mitigated by certain reserves—a Christianity perverted in the revolutionary sense, there exists also in social Catholicism a tendency to combat the forces of subversion by accepting or by pretending to accept the formal presupposition of enemy ideology, namely, the primacy of the social and the possibility of an earthly paradise. This is an error, even if one tries to conciliate this utopian principle with the maintenance of social inequality or to mask the problem of inequality by an excessive insistence on the theme of global prosperity or by vague declarations on justice. In acting thus, one concedes to the adversary an initial advantage which it will be impossible to regain; he gives him the choice of the battleground, a ground where he cannot but win.

We must have the courage to confess sincerely that the Christian religion is not a religion of the social, while adding that social reforms and social good works can lead to happier and more lasting results when they are inspired by a spirit which is free from any totalitarian illusion—the spirit of Catholicism which, through justice and charity, the spirit of moderation and limitation concerning any prospect of a transformation of the natural order—whose adjustment on such and such a concrete matter will remain an ever-recurrent task as long as our bonds with the supernatural are not definitely severed.

Immunity to the Spirit

But our main interest here is the illusory pretext to accomplish the Gospel message concerning the poor and the humble

by eliminating as much as possible the inequalities between social ranks. We reproach this concept not for going too far but for misunderstanding the real sense of the Gospel message and for responding to it, in fact, by its negation. In giving the Gospel the sense of an ideal of social reorganization, that concept rejects it in its authentic sense which inspires us with a free and detached though non-subversive attitude, toward social categories.

While true Christianity warns us against the totalitarian implications of a natural social temptation to despise the little and to consider modest lives as lacking importance, etc., equal pseudo Christianity reproaches the natural social order for not being totalitarian enough (social ranks do not correspond enough with personal values, etc.) and proposes itself to reorganize society in a justifiable totalitarianism. The utopia of a society which would be a harmonious cosmos of rights perfectly insured, perfectly harmonized and guaranteeing the perfect well-being of each individual as a direct function of universal well-being (every individual group or state of mind having *another* conception of well-being, and every discordant need having been eliminated)—here is the utopia of a world wholly cleansed of mercy.

The concept of a society which no longer knows the distinction between little and great and which is organized under the rule of the common man regarded as sovereign, is the concept of a world entirely purified from the discordant, the accidental, the tensions, where the Christian discovery of the "glory of the humble" is at home. It is the concept of a world where even reference to the supernatural will have been sterilized and will be perfectly immune to the breath of the spirit.

Prevention's Ounce

One knows the progressivist axiom, *better prevention than cure*, a formula which reflects the inherent inhumanity of humanitarianism and the profound hatred for spontaneity which characterizes the protagonists of liberty as a universal idea. This formula enounces a thorough contempt for mercy; for he who is already sick does not present any interest; he is outside the kingdom of Heaven which is in this world, his presence soils the closed harmony of the naturalist paradise. Thus the formula presages a system of hygienic and eugenic tyranny (a fantastic and arbitrary tyranny which has already left the realm of pure fiction). For prevention implies determination by the social *engineer* (whose task is to satisfy the exacting spectator) of the entire life of those still capable of salvation, including the generations to come, in such a manner that the need of mercy will be excluded.

This may allow us to understand the logic of progressivist equalism in a general manner. In the ideal society every actual inequality will appear as a translation or postulate of fundamental quality and every discrimination between men as the necessary implications of this system of pure equality. Every privilege having vanished and each man being treated by society for what he is worth (to society of course), every position of command will have a sacred prestige and every favored person will seem to incarnate by this sole fact a surplus of values which can no longer be considered as relative or accidental. On the other hand, anyone who seems to be unlucky, under-privileged, or the victim of discrimination, or who simply betrays his inaptitude for perfection, or a stubborn patient who has been unable to profit from universal prevention, or perhaps a stupid reactionary who needs to be cured, or a useless part of the whole or, who knows, a counter-revolutionary ripe for liquidation. It will therefore be a society excluding any possibility of intervention in favor of inferiors, dispossessed, or humbled people. More than in an unequal pagan society these discriminations will be *absolute* attributes and demands of the universal man, outside of which no subject, no right, no value will be supposed to exist.

In conforming myself to the authentic Christian injunction, I shall have regard for inequalities or special gifts. I shall exercise whatever power falls to my lot, with the consciousness that there is something which is essentially more important.

In the system of pseudo Christian equalism, on the contrary, I shall be deprived, or riddled, as the case may be, of even the pagan rudiments of such an awareness, that is to say, of the natural inkling of the finitude and imperfection of human hierarchies. In my identity with the collective universal man, a totality outside of which there will be for me only nothingness, nothing will balance my servility, which is fed on pride, nor temper my exigences. The equalist world, or a world characterized by *signs* of pseudo Christian equalism, so long as it exists or lasts, will be substantially different from a merely pagan world, above all in the sense that it will present a more fundamental contrast with the society of Christian inspiration than could any pagan society.

AUREL KOLNAI

(Dr. Kolnai teaches at Laval University. "The Cult of the Common Man" was first published in French in the *Laval Theologique et Philosophique* (1947). This is a translation and abridgement of Dr. Kolnai's original article.—The Editor)

BOOK REVIEWS

De Profundis

COLOR, EBONY

By Helen Caldwell Day
Sheed & Ward, \$2.25

In telling her life story—at the age of 23—mind you—this Negro girl is urged on by two different impulses. The first one concerns her personal search for God and an examination of the events in her life as related to this. It is an exceedingly eventful life to date and moves from the time she was a self-willed determined little girl in the South, already restless in her poor respectable home of indeterminable religion and made quite aware at an early age that a Negro is different from a white, through her nursing studies in New York City (and one eagerly mentions how beautiful and inspiring is her conception of the vocation of nursing) to her first conversion, followed by a misfit of a husband, then a baby boy from whom she seems to have been separated at first for some not too clear necessity, then a second conversion which really "took" (this part will be helpful to recent converts), the incapacitation of tuberculosis, and the eventual turning to writing as an outlet to express her faith. When she looks upon the events of her life in their relation to her spiritual development she speaks with clarity, directness and poise.

Then there is the second problem. It is her absorption in this which gives the emotional impetus to the book and here it becomes most intense and absorbing. It revolves around the pain and sterility she and her people suffer in their status of not-brothers. Her title will give you a clue as to which of the two directions holds sway—at least at this stage of her game.

One feels that the two themes—so interdependent upon each other for her, have not merged into one as yet in the fabric of her life—that her sense of separation from her "neighbors" and of their cruelty to her and hers is fully as potent a factor in her life experience as her intellectual acknowledgement of her oneness with them before God. It is crude to put it so but she almost exploits her position in an attempt to satisfy her sense of justice.

Some might object that this "United" States is in too great need of such "hot copy" to have time to wait until she has forgiven her enemies. Certainly her nature pre-eminently qualifies her to tell the story of the Negro in our "free" democracy. Her personal integrity and earnest intention to forgive and to surmount barriers are precious qualities in disarming "white" readers who are steeped in prejudices and raw to the touch. Her great capacity for giving and her courage will win the sympathy and gratitude of many. But one still believes her particular and individual message to expose the injustice accorded her people will be more fruitfully spoken forth when she becomes less conscious herself that she is color ebony. Then her story won't be ending in the middle and will not seem so much like the breathless first installment of a serial. So great seem her spiritual potentialities that even as far as she has gone it seems there is much farther to go.

HELEN THAYER

The Mass

HANDS AT MASS

By Walter Nurnberg

(Introduction by

C. C. Martindale, S.J.)

Sheed & Ward, \$3.00

THE MASS

By Dom Urbain Seres, O.S.B.

A Fides Album, 15¢

It is the Mass that matters.

Two different kinds of craftsmen have brought this home again—Walter Nurnberg with his superb photographs (*Hands at Mass*) and Dom Urbain Seres with his clear and loving commentary (*The Mass*).

In the Fides album Dom Urbain says at the Mass is eight things—a banquet, a sacrifice, a reunion, a festival, conversation with God, an offering, a call to action, and a preview of heaven—and then proceeds with astute reasoning to explain why. The result is an extension of what we do know, any number of items we do not know, and a few subtle slaps on the wrists in regard to what we think we know.

While the Fides publication hits a fine level in scholarly interpretation, *Hands at Mass* is a work of art. For photography can be an art and Walter Nurnberg proves it with his seventeen plates of the outstanding actions of the Mass. In his foreword photographer Nurnberg has projected his belief that photography is the "herald of Reality" and as such must neither generalize nor embellish. Consequently, the pictures—from the lightly touching fingertips in the *Introibo ad altare Dei*, through the offering, the consecration, to the final blessing—convey with unadulterated purity the divine impetus of the greatest of prayers.

Once I viewed the Mass from a little clerestory almost directly above and only a few feet away from the altar. *Hands at Mass* is an artistic second-best to such a privilege.

CAROL DAVIS

Meditations for Priests

ALTER CHRISTUS

By F. X. L'Hoir, S.J.

Newman Press, \$2.50 (cloth),

\$1.25 (paper)

European priests favor a custom that is not over-prevalent in the United States—that of periodic "days of recollection," one or two at a time, sometimes spent in a monastery, in a real

spirit of retreat and silence and prayer, even monthly. The book *Alter Christus* of Father L'Hoir was written for just such days.

The author, Father L'Hoir (1883-1948), was born in Louvain, joined the Society of Jesus and practically spent his whole life in the Papal seminary of Kandy, where as teacher of theology, rector, and spiritual father, he greatly influenced priests working in almost every diocese in India. His book contains seventy-two of his meditations, divided into a series of twelve corresponding to the twelve months of the year, usually related to the liturgical seasons and feasts, and so of possible use for a monthly "day of recollection." Each meditation is brief but forceful, of three points, with thought-provoking questions concluding each section. In the list of subjects there are practicable considerations on the Breviary, penitency, the priest's confession, detachment, examen of conscience, holiness, interior life, love for God, Mary, the Mass, meditation, preaching, obedience, the priest's studies, value of time, zeal. The material is sincerely objective, steeped in the spirit and utterances of Saint Paul, the

liturgy and the encyclicals. The subjective personality of the author, of any of his experiences, or biographical data, do not emerge—only a voice encouraging all priests to strive for higher ideals and greater perfection as he reflects this desire of the Church, the Spouse of Christ, into the spiritual eyes of the “other Christs” of the priesthood.

REV. JOHN T. CALLAHAN

Strange New World

FEAR AT MY HEART
By Mary Harris
Sheed & Ward, \$2.50

Fear At My Heart is less a novel than a fictional *impression* of childhood—that of an eleven-year-old British schoolgirl, Anthea Rendell. The principal interest of the narrator is the impact upon Anthea of the several people who, big and large, constitute “life” for her: her intellectual parents whose world is very widely divided from hers, an Irish domestic named Bridget, a governess of relentlessly Victorian inclinations, a vicar and his family, a few schoolmates, and the grandmother of one of these. There is movement and direction in the story however, the large events being the death of Anthea’s father, the dismissal of Bridget (who gives Anthea her first deep knowledge of love and her first acquaintance with the supernatural), Anthea’s transfer to a new school where her repressed spirit begins to unfurl, her reunion with Bridget, her growing desire for a religious perspective and for the consolation of the knowledge of the existence of God. Discernible in the complex of Anthea’s experience is the concern of a loving Providence and signs of her predestination to membership in the Catholic Church.

The achievement of *Fear At My Heart* is a very successful evocation of childhood. The hypersensitive Anthea provides a rich study of the subtle, yet intense, joys and miseries of that time. Conflicting, and varied and subtle, too, are her motives and the warnings and conclusions of her conscience. She is, above all, pained by her isolation and by her unidentified longing to be loved.

A rather marked weakness of the book is the arbitrary disposition of occurrences and conversations in it—a striking lack of inevitability which suggests insistently the hypothesis that the writing has some too immediate autobiographical basis and that some passages are adapted *recollections* of the childhood of the author. Despite such a serious artistic flaw, however, this very pleasant book will reward its readers by recalling to their memories sensations and modes of experience long since forgotten. It will revive the impact, the distinctive quality, and the freshness of the original experience of their child-lives.

DENNIS SHEA

The Double Take

STARSET AND SUNRISE
By Nicholas Sandys
Sheed & Ward, \$2.50

I am sorry that I cannot recommend *Starset and Sunrise* for, in my opinion, it leaves something to be desired—it rather, contains a few things to be regretted. But first, the data.

Starset and Sunrise is a novel written in the first person—as the phrase has it—in a run-on style comparable to that of the late Damon Runyon. It is the lowbrow autobiography of Marjorie Chatham, a san-

the British gipsy who is remarkable for, among other things, the phlegmatic condition of her conscience. Her youth is broken into several distinct phases: an "idyllic" early childhood in a caravan in the woodlands of Hampshire, a few years as a dockside delinquent in Southampton, adolescence in an "approved school" or reformatory conducted by nuns. Here Marjorie determines to become a movie-star. By capitalizing on every opportunity and by allowing nothing whatever to impede her steady progress she succeeds eventually in attaining her goal. Ultimately, however, she repudiates the hideous world of "glamor" in England and in Hollywood and is converted to a sincere practice of her religion through the adoption of a little girl and by the experience of starring in a film production of the life of Saint Therese.

The center of the story is the progress toward spiritual maturity of a soul previously very shallow and self-centered. This serious concern underlies a very breezy narrative, richly humorous in many ways. The fault is that the spirit of the book is not integrally Christian. It is, on the one hand, a religious novel (however slight or casual) and, on the other, one which depends for some of its effects upon a secular point of view. I suspect that some of Sheed and Ward's regular readers will put the book down with a sense of having been somehow tainted. I fear, however, that a number of passages describing Marjorie's love-life will disturb more suggestible of its readers.

All things considered, it seems to me that one would do better to read something else.

DENNIS SHEA

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946 (Title 49, United States Code, Section 233) of INTEGRITY published monthly at New York, N. Y. for October 1, 1951.

1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher: Integrity Publishing Company, 243 East 36th Street, New York 16, N. Y.; Editor: Carol Jackson, 243 East 36th Street, New York 16, N. Y.; Managing editor: None; Business manager: None.

2. The owner is: (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be given and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, its name and address, as well as that of each individual member, must be given.) Integrity Publishing Company: Ed Willock, Carol Jackson, Doreen O'Sullivan, John Murphy, all of 243 East 36th Street, New York 16, New York.

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CAROL JACKSON

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 1st day of October, 1951. E. Comaralez, #24-1501600—(My commission expires 3/30/53).

Letter to an Author

Dear Mrs. Homan,

Sincere thanks for your latest and inspiring contribution to the of Christian letter writing (*Letters to the Martyrs*, McKay, \$3.00). I recommend these *epistles* to all Christians who are striving to live t faith in these crucial times (times which are not unlike the early days Christianity) and who may perhaps be called upon to bear *witness Christ* by shedding their blood. I liked your presentation, your skill constructing two biographies in each letter—that of the addressee a that of the martyr to whom he or she is compared. Outstanding amo the collection, I thought, were those to Saint Maria Goretti concerni Saint Agnes, to Father Kolbe (the Polish Franciscan Martyr) concerni the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, and to Father Pro concerning Saint Lawren By means of these comparisons, too, you show the continuing *trium of the Cross*, from the days of Saint Stephen (the proto-martyr) to o own times, the “second age of martyrdom”! Your style is vivid—warm with Christian love and profound simplicity. I hope that many peop and in particular Christian families, will read your letters and profit much as did this reviewer . . . All good wishes to you, in Christ.

MARY CHRISTENSEN



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THE LAST THREE . . . AND FOUR MORE

Kate O'Brien wrote *TERESA OF AVILA* (\$2.00) because she was so fascinated by Saint Teresa's wit, wisdom and sanctity, she couldn't leave her alone. Her book is almost as lively as Saint Teresa's own writings, and that is saying something. Whether you already know this saint intimately or not, you will enjoy this book. *HANDS AT MASS* by *Walter Nurnberg* (\$3.00) is a book of quite excellent photographs of a priest's hands as he says Mass. Father Martindale contributes an introduction and commentary on the Mass, which makes the book not only very valuable for our own reading, but also a wonderful book to give a non-Catholic who wants to know what Mass is all about.

We have one book for children this Fall, *THE ROSARY: THE JOYFUL MYSTERIES* by *Elizabeth Wansbrough* and *Cecilia Pollen* (\$2.25). To show children how much there is to think about in each mystery, there is a picture for every Hail Mary of the first five decades. A good idea for children, and not so bad for grown-ups who have trouble in keeping their minds on the mysteries. These are the last three books we shall publish this Fall, and all are now ready. Of those that have been published a little while, *Helen Caldwell Day's* autobiography and apologia, *COLOR EBONY* (\$2.25) is getting some of the best reviews—almost as good as it deserves—and in the secular as well as the Catholic press. No wonder really. As Father John S. Kennedy said, "She was born black and is a born writer," and it's almost impossible to read her book without getting fond of her.

Both the novels we published this Fall—picked apparently for being as different from each other as possible—are being interestingly reviewed. Nearly everyone likes *Mary Harris's* *FEAR AT MY HEART* (\$2.50), the story of an eleven-year-old surreptitiously looking for God and surrounded by pleasantly fantastic people. *STARSET AND SUNRISE* (\$2.50) by *Nicholas Sandys* about two-thirds like, and the rest are furious with us for publishing it. Well, we are still glad we did, so tiresome and perverse are we, we think the heroine's early lack of morals ought not to make anyone so darned sure she couldn't possibly come to a happy ending.

Don't miss *Margaret Harrington's* *CALVARY AND COMMUNITY: THE PASSION AND THE MASS* (\$4.00) by the way. It has depth as well as breadth, and is very much a book for *INTEGRITY* readers. No time yet for much in the way of reviews, but we can tell you that Dr. Karl Stern read it in proof and thought it a masterpiece.

Order books from your bookstore

The Christmas *TRUMPET* is about ready. If you have moved since the last number came out be sure and let *Pirie MacGill* know. Of course, if you don't get it for any other reason, such as not having asked for it. It comes free and postpaid.



For Christmas 1951 - Give Integrity 1952



DDLY enough, there is hardly a soothsayer who has not predicted dire things will happen in 1952. How blessed therefore to be a Christian (since they may be right). You don't have to crouch in your cellar, trembling while waiting for the end because there is always something you can and should be doing. You don't have to scheme to remove yourself and your friends to a bomb-proof cave in the Rockies, because it isn't *when* you die, but how holily that counts. And obviously you don't have to engage in a drinking or eating marathon like those whose god is their belly.

INTEGRITY approaches the year 1952 with confidence and a mission. We intend to say, over and over again, in a variety of ways, and apropos of a dozen subjects (starting off with Hope and Despair, then Birth Control, then The Cross) that the war in our hearts and countries is between good and evil, right and wrong, Heaven and Hell, and is *not* some petty quarrel over surface issues. As Franz Werfel expressed it, "The world has become so engrossed in the struggle between the left and the right that it has forgotten that there is also an above and a below." That's not a bad quotation to memorize for a presidential election year.

Give INTEGRITY to your friends for Christmas and we'll try to give your friends a new perspective. We'll start them with the December issue, which is about a variety of things, but especially Christmas.

Integrity Publishing Company, 243 East 36th St., New York 16, N.Y.

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